

## The “Patron Saint of Music”

Beethoven’s Image and Music in Japan’s Adoption of Western Classical Music and Practices

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the School of Musicology.

Chapel Hill

2009

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## Abstract

CHRISTINA DECIANTIS DAVISON: The Patron Saint of Music: Beethoven's Image and Music in Japan's Adoption of Western Classical Music and Practices  
(Under the direction of Annegret Fauser)

This thesis explores the factors that led to the enduring popularity of Beethoven's music in Japan. Early in the Meiji Period (1868-1912) when Japan embraced Westernization, German artists and educators instilled respect for the tradition of German art music in their Japanese students. Beethoven's music became the most valued source of material for education and performance in Japan in the years before the Second World War. During the war, Western music faced opposition from a nationalist government which reversed course, calling for the development of a native Japanese musical style untainted by Western oppression. However, Beethoven's music still found a ready place in concert halls and schools. Many teachers and performers came to its rescue, defending the music's masculinity, German origins, and associations with Beethoven's Romantic determination and unyielding spirit. After the war, his music escaped censorship because of its widespread popularity and the belief that Beethoven transcended his nationality.

### Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the Kenichiro Shimada and the staff of the Gordon W. Prange Collection at the University of Maryland for their invaluable assistance during my research. I also wish to thank Dr. Shusuke Yagi of Furman University for his assistance in translation and location of the Japanese language materials used in this project, and Dr. Yuki Aratake and Sara Farner-Budarz of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for their assistance with translation. I also must thank my husband, Jonas Davison, for his support and encouragement.

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## **I. Introduction – Japanese Assimilation of Western Musical Style and Practice**

Amidst all the political shifts of the twentieth century and the changing messages from their leadership after the incipient stages of Westernization, the Japanese people have exhibited an unshakeable love for the music of Ludwig van Beethoven, which has been particularly well-displayed in their treatment of his monumental Ninth Symphony. In Japanese society, Beethoven is not considered merely a master of Western classical music; rather, he is considered *the* Master, the composer of the most celebrated works in Japan. This high regard is partially the result of the historically strong German-Japanese artistic relationship, but the unbroken lineage of Beethoven performances testifies to other important factors, including the association of his works with masculinity, the romanticism of “joy through suffering,” and transcendence and brotherhood among mankind.

Japanese publications since the Meiji restoration have shown a tendency to privilege the visual and literary arts over the performing arts.<sup>1</sup> These fields both acknowledge Western influence and the adoption of Western techniques of creation beginning in the late nineteenth century. However, neither field elevates any particular Western artists to such celebrity status, and neither field points to one great master whose work represents the educational and aesthetic standard of the art. While specific Japanese authors, poets, painters, and sculptors who popularized Western techniques or blended those techniques with their native idioms are

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<sup>1</sup> One example is *The Japan Yearbook*, an annual publication translated into English in order to give foreign residents, Japanese living abroad, and other friends of Japan information on the country’s history, growth and culture. For the first several decades of the publication’s history it included an entire section for discussion of the history and current status of the visual arts and literature in Japan, but little to no mention of musical life, theater or dance.

sometimes linked with a specific Western artist of influence, these mentions are brief.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that Beethoven's case as a revered artistic master is unique in the history of Japanese Westernization. Furthermore, the field of music itself was unique among the Japanese arts before the Second World War also because of the pronounced split between native and foreign practice. One could be a performer and practitioner either of traditional Japanese music or of foreign music. In an article in the *Japan Times Weekly* from June of 1940, a young film actress confessed that when she was younger, she played the piano very well and intended to "go into foreign music" as her career, before she discovered acting.<sup>3</sup> This separation into two musical traditions was apparently widely accepted: the 1924-25 *Japan Yearbook* claims that

Music in Japan exists in two distinct forms, one of them Japanese music handed down from old Japan, and the other Western music which was introduced from Europe and America after the Restoration of Meiji. Until about ten years ago these two often appeared side by side on the program of the same concert, but of late they have become separated. There are therefore two sorts of music lovers...Generally speaking, students and other young men prefer [Western music].<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The literature section of the 1933 *Japan –Manchouko Yearbook* lists certain Western influences on writers which change between periods of artistic trends, beginning with Englishmen Sir Walter Scott and Edward Lytton, and extending through Frenchmen Henri Barbusse and Paul Morand in more current trends. The "Fine Arts" section mentions that there *were* influential teachers from several Western countries, but does not name them.

<sup>3</sup> *Japan Times Weekly*, Vol. 6 no 8. Thursday June 20, 1940

<sup>4</sup> *Japan Yearbook* 1924-1925, p. 352



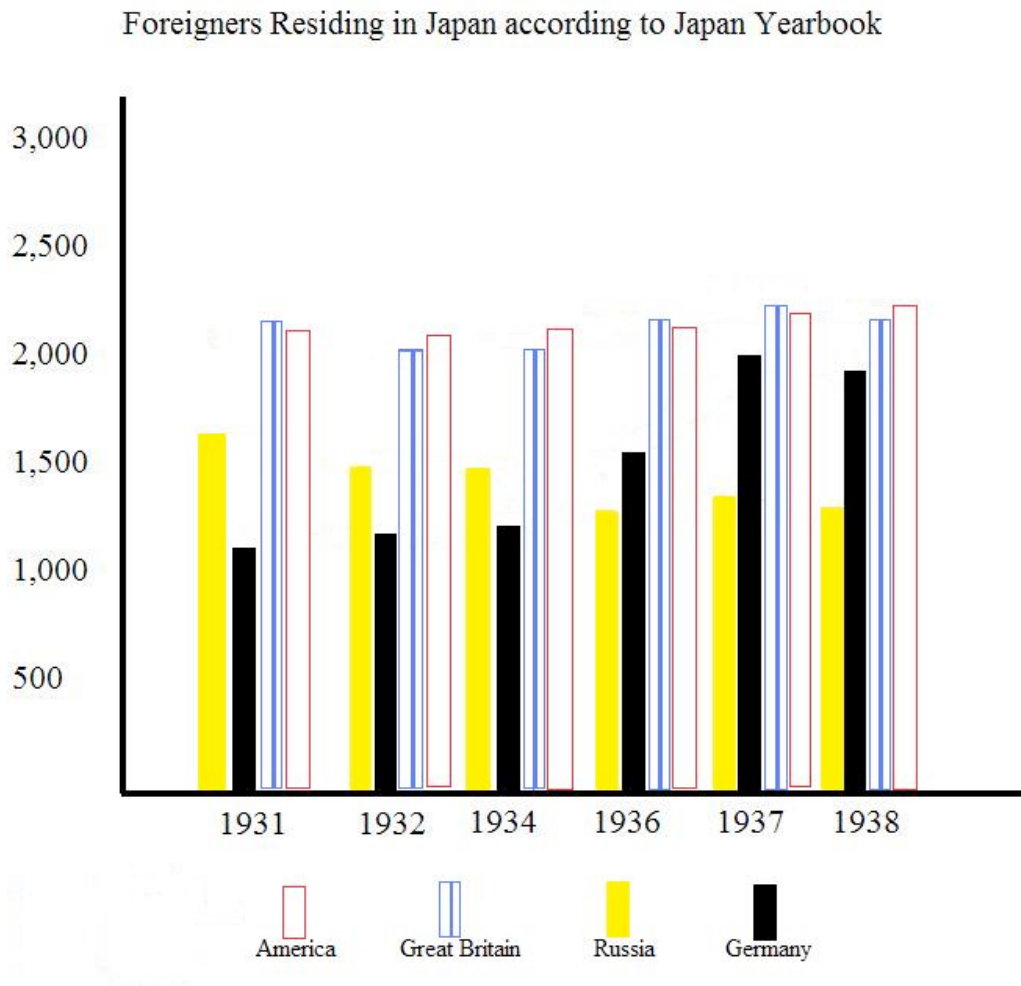
While many musicians received training in both types of music, professionals tended to specialize in one or the other because the contexts for education and performance were so radically different. This may be one of the reasons for the establishment of Western musical heroes, whose works were studied, performed, and appreciated by both Japanese musicians and their audiences.

One of the richest periods in the history of Japanese Beethoven reception lies between the end of the First World War and the end of the Second. In the 1930s and 1940s, Japan's already strong cultural ties with Germany increased in number, and the two countries experienced a deepening connection based on educational exchange. During these years, the numbers of Germans residing in Japan rose more sharply than other foreign resident populations from Western Europe, and many of these residents were music teachers and performers. Inspired by its connections with Germany, in the interwar period, Japan began to develop a greater self-awareness as a nation and a desire to be seen as a world power equivalent with the advanced cultures of the West. This led to government encouragement of what Ury Eppstein referred to as "cultural chauvinism," an exaltation of Japanese native culture and a rebellion against the dominance of Western cultural techniques and products.<sup>5</sup> However, despite this open rejection of Western influence, the thriving market of Western-style performance, music education, and composition continued to flourish throughout the Second World War, and Beethoven's work remained a cornerstone of Japanese musical life.

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<sup>5</sup> Ury Eppstein's 1987 article "School Songs Before and After the War: From *Children Tank Soldiers* to *Everyone a Good Child*," in *Monumenta Nipponica* used this phrase to describe the motivations behind selection processes in educational songbook production. However, many other scholars have described this period as one of Japanese national pride.

Table 1 – Population trends in Japan during the interwar period, according to census information in the *Japan Yearbook*.<sup>6</sup>



Recent musicological research conducted on the reception of Beethoven’s music in Japan has yet to delve deeply into Japan’s cultural relationship with Germany, particularly during the volatile 1930s and 1940s. Yasuyuki Fukumoto, a Japanese scholar and Beethoven

<sup>6</sup> Information taken from *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* between the years 1933 and 1944.

expert, has begun to explore the composer's reception in his five-part Master's thesis *On Beethoven Reception in Japan* (日本におけるベートーヴェン受容), completed in 2002.<sup>7</sup> This exploration has laid the groundwork for future scholarship on the issue, but remains by necessity a broad overview of the topic. His fourth section deals with the Second World War, concentrating primarily on Japanese attitudes toward Western music found in music publications of the time, but his focus is not on the relationship between Japan and Germany as manifested in artistic relationships and exchange. Mattias Hirschfeld's *Beethoven in Japan: Zur Einführung und Verbreitung westlicher Musik in der japanischen Gesellschaft* is the first large-scale work in a Western language to approach Beethoven's privileged status in Japanese musical life.<sup>8</sup> The book explores musical life, publications, and government control in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The section on the Second World War mentions Fukumoto's assertion that it was during the interwar period that Beethoven's image finally developed as the greatest Western composer of all, yet Hirschfeld does not explore in-depth which factors contributed to the development of Beethoven's image in these years.

This thesis will explore the rich history of Western classical music in Japan by examining the creation of Beethoven's image, its nourishment through cultural ties with German artists, and its weathering of the storm of worldwide conflict. First I will explore the importation of Western music into Japan in the late nineteenth century and the factors which contributed to the early establishment of cultural ties with Germany through the First

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<sup>7</sup> Fukumoto Yasuyuki, *On Beethoven Reception in Japan* (日本におけるベートーヴェン受容), MA Thesis, Kunitachi University, 2002.

<sup>8</sup> Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan: zur Einführung und Verbreitung westlicher Musik in der japanischen Gesellschaft*, (Hamburg: Bockel Verlag, 2005).

World War. These ties developed through the music education system with government aid and initiative, and led to a tradition of high respect for the German art music legacy which made teachers and guest artists from Germany highly desirable in Japan. I will then explore the development of Beethoven's privileged image and status among audiences, performers, and educational establishments, leading into an examination of his music's importance during the era of the Second World War. By examining both the threat of government censorship during the "cultural chauvinism" of wartime and the danger of upheaval during the postwar occupation, I will demonstrate that the firm foundation of Beethoven's music in the educational and performing spheres kept many of his pieces in wide circulation, both in written forms and in performances. Finally, I will explore the history of Japan's relationship with the Ninth Symphony from 1917 through 1949 as a case study which reveals both the importance of cultural ties with Germany and Beethoven's transcendence of those ties during the aftermath of the war.

## 2. The Beginnings of Western Musical Life in Japan

According to research published in the *Japan Yearbook* beginning in 1933, the Japanese believed their experience with Western music began sometime in the *Tenmon* period (in the mid-sixteenth century) when Christian missionaries brought the music of their worship traditions to Japan and began to introduce their converts to Western tonality.<sup>9</sup> Hirschfeld's recent study names Portuguese Jesuit priest Francisco Xavier, who landed in Japan in 1549, as the first known missionary to come to Japan.<sup>10</sup> Music used in worship would probably have been mostly motets and mass movements, and there are records of the viol, rebec, trumpet, charamela, and lute being played by Westerners. Both the *Yearbook* and Hirschfeld's study also mention that the organ enjoyed widespread popular use after being introduced by missionaries.<sup>11</sup> However, the burgeoning religious movement was forced underground by the Shogunate, and most Westerners were driven out of Japan. From about 1630 forward, Western-style music could be heard only in the sections of the country where limited contact with Holland was allowed and Dutch residents could live.<sup>12</sup>

When Japan finally came out of its period of isolation at Commodore Perry's demand, the floodgates to Europe and America were suddenly opened wide, and Western music became a vital aspect of the cultural reform the government sought. This time, the adoption

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<sup>9</sup> *Japan Yearbook* 1933, 794. The Japan Yearbook is an English-language publication which attempts to make information on Japanese life and culture available to the world. The first Yearbook was founded in 1912 by Professor Takenobu Yoshitaru, who passed away in 1931. Takenobu's wife managed to complete the 1931 yearbook, but after his death Katsuji Inahara founded a publication by the same title which he claimed had no connection to Takenobu's project, but would attempt to combine the best efforts of all available similar projects into one major resource.

<sup>10</sup> Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 23.

<sup>11</sup> *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* 1943-44, 794; Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 23.

<sup>12</sup> Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 23.

of foreign music began with the military. Traditional military instruments and ensembles were converted to fife and drum corps, then to brass bands, and by 1876 the emperor could enjoy the music of an Imperial Court Orchestra. The members of this ensemble were the *gakunin*, or court musicians, who were pulled away from their native instruments and asked to learn the instrumental and harmonic techniques of the West, a difficult task for musicians so firmly rooted in Eastern musical traditions.<sup>13</sup> The first reactions of the Japanese to these utterly unfamiliar sounds were mixed — Hirschfeld quotes several descriptions of Japanese listeners who found the sounds unattractive and the volume unbearable.<sup>14</sup> However, with the Imperial government's encouragement and the help of several foreign instructors and administrators, Western music grew quickly in popularity.

In 1879, the government empowered cultural Westernization with the creation of the Center for Musical Education, or Music Investigation Committee (*Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari*), which would later be re-named The Tokyo School of Music (*Tokyo Ongaku Gakkou*).<sup>15</sup> The Center's three main objectives were “the creation of a new corpus of music using both Western and Eastern elements; the training of musicians in preparation for the new developments to come; and the introduction of music into the national school curriculum.”<sup>16</sup> Bostonian Luther Whiting Mason, who had been invited to direct the military

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<sup>13</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku: Japanese Music in the Twentieth Century*, (Lanham, MA: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2002), 28. Galliano's text is the most comprehensive and valuable resource concerning Western music's history in Japan, and the translation from the original Italian into English has opened up access to an invaluable resource for English-speaking scholars.

<sup>14</sup> Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 32-33.

<sup>15</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 29.

<sup>16</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 30.

band initiative, helped the Center's director, Izawa Shuji, to write the first school songbook. Ninety percent of the book's songs had Western melodies with newly-composed Japanese texts.<sup>17</sup> This helped to lay the groundwork for the younger generations of Japanese, who grew up familiarized with Western notation and tonality in addition to the sounds and instruments of their native music.

Japan's reception of Western classical music was informed by centuries of musical and educational traditions, which included immersion in the new material and loyalty to one's educational lineage. According to Luciana Galliano, "When Western music was first introduced to Japan, it was studied in the Japanese way: by imitation, by assimilating it 'obediently,' and by total identification with the precepts of the original."<sup>18</sup> This "obedience" referred to a musician's total devotion to acquiring a new set of abilities and knowledge completely different from his or her past training. It also meant that early Japanese compositions in Western style sounded like their classical models, using pre-fabricated formulas and techniques that produced a pseudo-Western sound. Obedience was also cultivated in Japanese music through a strong sense of belonging and loyalty to one's particular school of study. This was partially based on the reliance of traditional Japanese music on a system of guilds, membership in which was necessary for practitioners of all types of music. Japanese musicians needed to have a deep knowledge and understanding of their teachers' methods and their educational lineage, and any actions that constituted a departure from that lineage or from their school of training was considered a betrayal and a

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<sup>17</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 30.

<sup>18</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 10.

display of ingratitude. Thus, “although each artist does have an established personal artistic identity, this is secondary to the artistic identity that is passed on from teacher to student and often the worth of an artist’s output is measured by his loyalty to this tradition...”<sup>19</sup> This meant that the tastes of teachers invited into Japan from other lands, and the countries ready to receive Japanese students in the arts, had a profound impact on the beginnings of Westernized musical life in Japan.

### **German Influence on Westernization in Japan**

Galliano calls the years between 1870 and 1945 “the period when everything to do with German musical history and culture was very much revered.” This reverence was driven by education. The Japanese were eager to learn, and very early on, influential educators laid the groundwork for a preference for German music. German composer and conductor Franz Eckert came to direct the Navy’s music program at the invitation of the Ministry of Defense in 1879, and he had great influence on the formation of musical life in Meiji Japan.<sup>20</sup> From the 1880s forward it was not unusual for Japanese musicians to go to Germany to study composition and music theory, and many of the first foreign artists invited to Japan by the Ministry of Defense were Germans. Franz Eckert, in his fifth year in Japan, was appointed as director of *Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari* in 1883, and resigned this post in 1886. The *Japan Yearbook* claims that Eckert “contributed so much to the musical advancement in [Japan]

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<sup>19</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 39.



that he is now regarded as the Father of German music in in this country.”<sup>21</sup> Although Luther Whiting Mason had contributed to Japanese education in Western music before Eckert arrived, and had become an instructor at *Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari* in 1880, the Japanese never gave him this sort of title or revered place in the histories. In 1887, the *Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari* was renamed the Tokyo School of Music at Ueno (*Tokyo Ongaku Gakkou*), and this institution became the primary tool for the dissemination of European music in Japan.<sup>22</sup>

The first regular musical exchanges funded by the government were established with Germany. The first Japanese military musicians to go abroad for musical study went to Paris in 1882, but violinist Koda Nobu went to Vienna to study from 1885 to 1889, and her younger sister Ando Ko went to Berlin from 1889 to 1902. Nobu sent her pupil Taki Rentaro, a violinist and one of the first notable Japanese composers in the Western style, to Leipzig in 1901 to study at Germany’s oldest conservatory.<sup>23</sup> This connection turned out to be very fruitful – twenty of the first twenty-one composition students to study in Europe studied in Germany, as a monument in Leipzig testifies.<sup>24</sup> Yamada Kōsaku, who is credited with writing the first symphony by a Japanese composer and is widely considered to be the first great Japanese compositional talent in the Western style, went to study in Berlin at the Staatliche Akademische Hochschule für Musik in 1910.<sup>25</sup> German teachers came to Japan,

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<sup>21</sup> *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* 1946-48, 556.

<sup>22</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 31.

<sup>23</sup> Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 52.

<sup>24</sup> Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 52.

<sup>25</sup> Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 44.

and the Japanese government established several grants for education in Germany, particularly in composition. After the First World War, there was a sharp rise in the number of cultural exchanges, with foreign teachers entering Japan to fulfill the rising demand for Western music, and Japanese students going abroad to study performance and composition. Kato Tetsuro's research on the cultural relationship between Japan and Germany in the twenties and thirties has revealed that by the late twenties, over fifty percent of all Japanese students studying abroad went to Germany. In 1929 for example, 277 students went abroad on government scholarships, and 151 of them went to Germany. Tetsuro points out that many of the students in countries such as Great Britain and France planned to study in Germany towards the end of their study as well.<sup>26</sup> Germany was a desirable location for many reasons. In addition to the prestige and respectability of Germany's academic and cultural influence, the country's depressed economy in the wake of the First World War meant that the Japanese yen was considerably stronger than the German mark. This economic advantage aided students and libraries to purchase academic and artistic materials from Germany and establish impressive collections.<sup>27</sup> This relationship became "an established tradition, and the German influence also made itself felt in the way the musical world became organized," meaning that the German immigrants and the Japanese musicians they trained ran the newly formed orchestras and performing groups,

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<sup>26</sup> Kato Tetsuro, "Cultural Relations during the 1920s and 1930s," in *Japanese-German Relations, 1895-1945*, ed. Christian W. Spang and Rolf-Harald Wippich, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 119-138.

<sup>27</sup> Kato Tetsuro, "Cultural Relations," 125.

programmed the concert seasons, and began to publish music periodicals all over the country.<sup>28</sup>

The Tokyo School of Music, which developed into the center of Japanese musical life in composition, performance, and musicology alike, enjoyed the skills of Franz Eckert, in addition to those of numerous other European musicians. Eckert was succeeded briefly by a Dutchman, Guillaume Sauvlet, in 1886. In 1889, Austrian Rudolph Diettrich took over the position. But by 1931, German musicians held the director position continuously, beginning with Klaus Pringsheim and continuing through the war years with Hans Schwieger and Helmut Felmer. A look at the 1943-44 edition of the *Japan Yearbook* reveals that, by the 1930s, there was also a ready supply of professors coming to the School of Music from Germany. Any time a professor at the Tokyo School of Music retired or left his or her post, a German artist quickly took over the vacancy. For example, composer and conductor Klaus Pringsheim's term as director of the school expired in 1937, and when he returned home to Germany, he was replaced by German Professor Hans Schwieger. When Schwieger left for the United States in March 1938, Professor Helmut Fermer from Germany came to Tokyo to fill his position that April. Voice teacher Maria Toll was replaced in 1937 by Ria von Hessert from Germany.<sup>29</sup> There were influential faculty members from other countries, most notably the Russian pianist Leonid Kreutzer. However, these reports show that by the thirties, German artists enjoyed a strong relationship with Japanese institutions, and that they were clearly sought out for teaching positions through existing artistic connections.

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<sup>28</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 41.

<sup>29</sup> *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* 1946-1948, 800.

Other cultural forces emerged in the thirties, strengthening the bond between Japan and Germany. Günther Haasch has described the formation of the *Deutsch-Japanische Gesellschaft* in both countries. In Berlin, a Japanese cultural research institute was founded in 1926, followed in 1927 by a sister institute, the Japanese-German Cultural Institute, in Tokyo. Both were overseen and partially funded by the Japanese and German governments. Out of this institute came the “German-Japanese Study Group,” later renamed “German-Japanese Society,” which provided monthly lectures and exhibitions on cultural subjects such as the arts.<sup>30</sup> In 1933, a group of German scholars founded the *Deutsches Forschungsinstitut* (German cultural research institute) in Kyoto for the purpose of studying both German and Japanese culture and “to promote friendly relations between the two countries.”<sup>31</sup> In 1937 a new organization was founded as a composers’ exchange, to facilitate performances of Japanese works in Germany and German works in Japan. The *Japanisch-Deutsche Werkaustausch* organized concerts in Karlsruhe and Tokyo for the exchange of modern works. University groups also formed based on interest in German music. Keio University’s Wagner Society held several concerts of all or mostly German or German-themed music. One event took place on Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1939, and included Beethoven’s Eighth Symphony, a Bach Prelude, Strauss’s *Blue Danube Waltz*, and a selection from Berlioz’s *La Damnation de Faust*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Kato Tetsuro, “Cultural Relations,” 121.

<sup>31</sup> *Japan Times and Mail*, Friday, November 3, 1939, 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Japan Times and Mail*, Sunday November 5, 1939, 8.

The Tokyo School of Music was the first reputable, government-established body of Western-trained musicians in Japan, and its reputation caused it to grow rapidly. By 1933, the *Japan Yearbook* entry concerning the school explained that the *Ongaku Gakkou*, “established in the early Meiji era, still flourishes as the only government institution of the kind, and is so crowded that applicants for entrance experience no small difficulty in gaining admission.”<sup>33</sup> In addition to the school’s prominent German faculty members and German-trained Japanese faculty members, the yearbook reveals a widely-known preference for German music in the school. “Generally speaking,” the author writes, “the Tokyo Academy of Music attaches much importance to German classical music, and the orchestra plays, among other masterpieces, symphonies and overtures by Beethoven, Bach, and Mozart, although modern French Works, such as the Nocturne by Debussy, have occasionally [sic] been attempted. The latest performances were the Fifth Symphony by G. Mahler, 1932, and the Ninth Symphony by Beethoven in the spring of 1933.”<sup>34</sup> Typically when great German music is mentioned, Beethoven’s name leads the list, followed most commonly by Bach, Brahms, and perhaps a few contemporary composers such as Hindemith. For example, under the section on orchestras, the *Japan Yearbook* describes the bi-monthly concert programs of the New Symphony Orchestra as “rendering pieces by various German composers, like Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert and Brahms, as well as the works of Tschaikovsky, Rimsky-

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<sup>33</sup> *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* 1933, 1028.

<sup>34</sup> *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* 1933, 1028. The *Yearbook* does not use italics or quotation marks to distinguish titles of musical works, so I have chosen to quote them without adding italics. Also, when it prints Japanese names, the given name appears first and the family name second. In the rest of the paper I have chosen to put the family name first, which is the traditional way to present Asian language names.

Korsakoff and Moussorgsky.”<sup>35</sup> Under the category of religious music, the yearbook says that while religious organizations have not yet made much musical advancement, the Tokyo Academy has given performances of both Beethoven’s *Missa Solemnis* and Mozart’s *Requiem*.<sup>36</sup>

German music was not the only music studied, performed, or appreciated in Japan during Meiji-era Westernization. Particularly among students of composition, there was a predilection for modern French music by Debussy, Poulenc, and other *fin-de-siècle* composers. Works by contemporary German composers, however, were extremely rare on concert programs and were not considered very important educational material. Japanese musicians had a reverence for tradition and deeply-rooted practices, and this probably informed their preference for older German music. As Galliano says,

From the late nineteenth century up to the Second World War the Japanese saw German music as representing established tradition and French music as offering new avenues to explore... It is probable that, in looking to Europe, Japanese musicians saw German music as offering the European equivalent of a culture with a revered tradition and strong artistic values. This would explain why most composers decided that the musical style that needed to be seriously studied was the German classical and romantic tradition and why they almost totally ignored contemporary German music.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* 1933, 1028.

<sup>36</sup> *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* 1933, 1029.

<sup>37</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 34.

However, modern French music, with its emphases on light, color, and abstract emotional content, may have been “more easily appreciated by the Japanese as they conjured up a world that appeared to be closer to Japanese aesthetics.”<sup>38</sup> The result was that composers studied the older German tradition, but explored modern French techniques once they had grasped the basics, and concert programs from the 1880’s up to the 1930’s across the country favored the established German canon and included a smaller repertory of more recent French and Russian music.

Naturally, German conductors and educators had some interest in programming modern pieces by German composers and publicly casting them in a favorable light. In November 1939, an article in the *Japan Times and Mail Daily* describes a performance by the Tokyo Music School under Helmut Felmer, which included the first performance of Paul Graener’s *Marienkantate*.<sup>39</sup> The columnist, who was most likely Hans Erik Pringsheim, the *Musical Jottings* columnist for the *Japan Times* and the *Japan Times Weekly*, wrote that Graener was “reknowned as one of the leading composers of contemporary Germany,” claiming, “his works have not achieved the broad, lasting international success as those by Richard Strauss, nor has he made the world talk of himself as Hindemith has, but he has long been considered as one of the foremost composers in the field of opera, with an imposing mastery of his craft.” Approximately half of the article was dedicated to Graener and his cantata, and described how the work was “in parts, closely related to the Catholic atmosphere

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<sup>38</sup> Luciana Galliano *Yogaku*, 34.

<sup>39</sup> *Japan Times and Mail* Monday, November 6, 1939, 4.

of Wagner's *Parsifal*.”<sup>40</sup> The few rare performances and reviews aside, however, it was mostly the German canon which captured Japanese attention, and not Germany's contemporary composers.

German influence began early in Japan's process of Westernization, and it continued through the advent of the Second World War. The music section of the *Japan Times* weekly on Thursday, March 9, 1939 bears the headline, “Berlin Orchestra.” The article states that on February 27<sup>th</sup> of that year, Prince Fumimaro Konoe, president of the Society for International Cultural Relations, had written a letter to Reichsführer Adolf Hitler and Propaganda Minister Joseph Göbbels, asking them to send the Berlin Philharmonic under the direction of Wilhelm Furtwängler to tour the cities of Tokyo and Osaka. After the Japan-German Cultural Pact had been confirmed, the Prince's brother Viscount Hidemaro Konoe was in Berlin to advocate for this visit. Their proposed plan was to have the Philharmonic stay for two months in Tokyo and Osaka, with seventeen performances in Tokyo (two over the radio), and five performances in Osaka (one over the radio). The article continues to say that the repertoire would include all of Beethoven's nine symphonies, as well as selections from Bach, Mozart, Haydn, “and other great German composers.” They note that Furtwängler, “now 53 years old, is supreme musical adviser to the Nazi government.”<sup>41</sup> The newspaper also ran a photo of Furtwängler between the “Berlin Orchestra” headline and the adjacent headline, “Beethoven

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<sup>40</sup> *Japan Times and Mail*, Monday, November 6, 1939, 4.

<sup>41</sup> *Japan Times Weekly*, Thursday, March 9, 1939, Vol. II, No. 10.



Night,” an advertisement for a Tokyo Symphony Orchestra program consisting entirely of Beethoven’s compositions (see Figure 1 below).<sup>42</sup>

Figure 1 – *Japan Times Weekly*, Thursday, March 9, 1939, Vol II no. 10. Wilhelm Furtwängler pictured beside a report of Japan’s invitation to host the Berlin Philharmonic for a two-month tour.

The image shows a page from the *Japan Times Weekly*, dated Thursday, March 9, 1939, Vol II no. 10. The page is divided into three main sections: ART, MUSIC, and DRAMA. The ART section features a large headline "BERLIN ORCHESTRA" and sub-headlines "With Conductor Furtwaengler Invited" and "For Performances Here". Below this, a paragraph describes a letter from the Society for International Cultural Relations to Prince Fumimaro Konoye, signed by Reichsfuehrer Adolf Hitler and Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, asking them to use their good offices to send the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra to Japan with Conductor Wilhelm Furtwaengler for 22 performances. The MUSIC section features a portrait of Wilhelm Furtwaengler, with a caption below it stating: "Wilhelm Furtwaengler, Conductor of Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra . . . . neither radio or gramophone can reproduce his art faithfully". The DRAMA section features a headline "BEETHOVEN NIGHT" and sub-headlines "Present by Tokyo Academy of Music" and "Features Young Soprano". Below this, it says "By Vincent Canzoneri". The text describes a concert by the Tokyo Academy of Music on Saturday, Feb. 25, at the Hibiya Hall, featuring the orchestra of the school conducted by Helmut Fellmer, violin professor Alexandre Moguilewsky, and soprano Mieko Kako. The program consisted of the following:

1. Musik zu Goethes "Egmont" Op. 84
  - (a) Ouverture
  - (b) 2 Lieder von Glarchen
    1. Die Trommel geruhret
    2. Freudvoll und leidvoll
  - (c) Clarchens Tod (Orch.)
  - (d) Siegessymphonie
2. Violinkonzert, D-dur, Op. 61

Events leading up to this invitation included prominent invitations for Japanese to conduct concerts in Berlin. In 1937, Japanese composer Yamada Kōsaku was invited to conduct the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, which turned out to be his last tour abroad.<sup>43</sup> Galliano suspects that there “were probably also political reasons behind this invitation, for it was in this year that the three fascist states, Italy, Germany, and Japan, drew up their fateful alliance. During this visit to Berlin, the German-Japan Cultural Association, which had been

<sup>42</sup> *Japan Times Weekly*, Vol. II, No. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 49.

set up the previous year, also conferred an award on Yamada.”<sup>44</sup> Two years later, the *Japan Times and Mail* daily newspaper reported on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1939, that “Viscount Hidemaro Konoye, noted conductor, held two orchestra recitals in Berlin. He conducted the Berlin State Opera House orchestra on January 4 and directed Mozart’s *Magic Flute*. Viscount Konoye was warmly applauded at his recital with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra on January 6.”<sup>45</sup>

In January of 1941, the German opera singer Carl Hartmann spent six weeks in Tokyo giving recitals and attending performances. During this stay, he apparently was impressed by the level of musical skill in Tokyo, because he revealed “plans to bring a German opera company to Japan in the near future” to the *Japan Times*.<sup>46</sup> “The project was brought up in connection with an earlier plan,” the newspaper claimed, “which was frequently reported, to bring to Japan the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Wilhelm Furtwaengler.” While the paper made it clear that this long-expected event did not take place, Hartmann seemed optimistic about the “positive and substantial financial help from both the German and the Japanese Governments,” which he expected would be necessary to realize the project. Hartmann’s high regard for Japanese musicianship was reportedly inspired by a “Beethoven evening he heard [in Tokyo] by the New Symphony Orchestra.” Subtly hinting at his German cultural pride, Hartmann alluded to an intangible Beethovenian essence which the Japanese musicians made a valiant attempt to express. The paper printed his high praise of this “really excellent symphony orchestra, which plays

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<sup>44</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 49.

<sup>45</sup> *Japan Times* January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1939. The family name *Konoe* is usually transliterated as *Konoye* in the *Times*, but modern transliteration considers it more correct to omit the “y.”

<sup>46</sup> *Japan Times Weekly & Trans-Pacific*, Thursday, January 1, 1941, 36.

Beethoven in most precise renditions. Even though it must be difficult for every individual member of the orchestra really to grasp the soul of Beethoven's music their playing was most efficient."<sup>47</sup>

### **German Artists in Japan – Jews and Dissenters**

Prominent German artists in the Japanese musical scene in the thirties and forties came to Japan for many reasons. Today several of the composers and conductors who were so lauded in those times exist in relative obscurity, but two of the most famous musicians to travel to Tokyo from Germany have fascinating histories. Both were Jewish conductors and both opposed National Socialism, so their popularity and respectability in Japan show that the government's "cultural chauvinism" was flexible and far from the genocidal ideology of the Nazi party.

Joseph Rosenstock was born in Krakow, Poland in 1895. He studied music first in Krakow and later in Vienna, but he spent most of his formative years and launched his career in Germany. His professional life began in Darmstadt in the twenties, when he accepted a position at the opera house there. He also conducted at the opera house in Wiesbaden. He spent the 1928-29 season at the Metropolitan Opera, forging connections which would serve him well later in life when he made New York his permanent home, but he spent the early thirties as music director of the Mannheim Opera and of the Jewish Kulturbund in Berlin. The latter appointment ended in 1936 when necessity drove him from Nazi Germany. He

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<sup>47</sup> *Japan Times Weekly & Trans-Pacific*, Thursday, January 1, 1941, 36.

accepted an invitation from Tokyo to conduct the New Symphony Orchestra, Japan's premier symphony, which had been founded by Viscount Hidemaro Konoe. He also accepted an appointment to direct the Japanese broadcasting orchestra, known as the JOAK. From 1937 well into the war years, Rosenstock was one of the most respected and sought-after musicians in Tokyo, and his influence went beyond conducting appointments. He was the natural choice to judge composition competitions as well, and opportunities for judging were as numerous as daily newspapers and music magazines. The programs played by the New Symphony Orchestra under Rosenstock showed an impressive repertoire for an orchestra only a few decades old, and were heavily weighted with selections from the German standard concert repertoire, including Bach, Brahms, and Beethoven. However, he also chose to program music from enemy countries, including his conquered homeland. The *Japan Times and Mail* on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1939 advertised the upcoming annual Promenade concert which would close the New Symphony Orchestra's season. The planned program consisted entirely of music by Slavic composers.<sup>48</sup>

Rosenstock brought his conducting expertise to Japan with him, but Klaus Pringsheim (1883-1972) brought even more – his widely praised composition skills, and two brilliant and capable sons. His younger son Klaus Jr. told some of his father's story in his memoirs, *Man of the World: Memoirs of Europe, Asia, and North America (1930s to 1980s)*.<sup>49</sup> In 1931, Klaus Pringsheim Sr. left Germany for Japan under the recommendation of the Ministry of Culture, to direct the orchestra and teach Western music history at the Tokyo Music School.

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<sup>48</sup> *Japan Times and Mail*, Monday, July 10, 1939.

<sup>49</sup> Klaus Pringsheim, Jr. and Victor Boesen, *Man of the World: Memoirs of Europe, Asia, and North America (1930s to 1980s)*, (Oakville, Ont; Buffalo, NY: Mosaic Press, 1995).

This early connection turned out to be a saving grace for the family, who had Jewish blood in generations past. In 1936, after being falsely accused of arson due to his heritage, the elder Pringsheim son, Hans, joined his father in Japan. Klaus, Sr. was obliged to leave his post at the Tokyo Music School in 1937 “at the demand of the German government,” who did not look kindly on Japan harboring Jewish dissenters.<sup>50</sup> After a short time working in Thailand, Pringsheim returned to Japan, where his younger son joined him in 1939. The two younger Pringsheims, both of whom spoke English, quickly learned Japanese and found work teaching languages and translating and writing articles for newspapers. Hans became the musical columnist for the *Japan Times and Mail* and the *Japan Times Weekly*. The family began attempting to obtain visas to travel to the United States, aware that because of the impending alliance between Japan and Germany, they could well end up in the Nazi regime once more. However, visas were not easy to acquire, and they remained in Japan until after the war. While in Japan, Klaus Sr. earned money through private teaching, composition and arranging projects, and conducting a chamber orchestra, which he founded himself. His disfavor with the German government limited his ability to work, but his influence and respectability as an artist were not destroyed. He and Rosenstock spent time together, most likely grateful for understanding company.<sup>51</sup> The Japanese government looked on the Pringsheim family as friends of Japan, and did not attack them or deliver them up to the German government as long as they kept out of trouble, but social pressures meant that any German citizens were unable to be seen with them, and Japanese people were also encouraged to keep their distance.

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<sup>50</sup> Pringsheim, *Man of the World*, 28

<sup>51</sup> Pringsheim, *Man of the World*, 43.

### 3. The Development of Beethoven's Image in Japan

The history of Japanese enthusiasm for Beethoven's works extends back to the beginning of the Meiji restoration.<sup>52</sup> The Japanese showed early interest in the chamber works, since small performances were popular and frequent. According to Fukumoto, one of the reasons for Beethoven's rise above other Western classical composers in the recognition of the Japanese was the use of his melodies for singing in school systems nationwide.<sup>53</sup> Among the Meiji government's main goals for Westernization was vocal training for every student, referred to as the "All-nation Singing Movement," which would expose them to the tonal system of the West and give them basic aural skills.<sup>54</sup> During the intense Westernization of the Meiji restoration, Beethoven's music played a largely functional role, centered on education in public schools. This meant that his music, while well-known, was marginalized because of its pragmatic functionality. However, as Beethoven's music became more widespread, his image began to develop and rise above the rest of Western composers whose music had been introduced to the Japanese.

By the beginning of the Taisho era (1912), Beethoven's image had solidified in music schools and performing circles as a celebrated musician, or "*Gakusei*" (楽聖).

Fukumoto attributes this fame partially to Japan's sole musicological center, the Tokyo School of Music, where Beethoven was held in high regard as the best source of teaching

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<sup>52</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 27-28.

<sup>53</sup> Fukumoto Yasuyuki, "Beethoven Reception IV," 1.

<sup>54</sup> The All-nation Singing Movement began under educational auspices, but quickly became a propaganda tool. The 1943-44 *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* describes the movement's purposes as "inspiring the nation with genial sentiments and bright spirits, promoting their ardent fighting spirit through the singing of healthful songs, and making a clean sweep of all unhealthy ditties." (p. 806)

material.<sup>55</sup> Music periodicals also played a major role in his widespread recognition as the master of Western classical music. Fukumoto suggests that among the general population, Beethoven's fame was due more to these high-profile institutions' recognition than to their enthusiasm over the music itself. The Japanese people knew Beethoven as the composer of those omnipresent concert works such as the "Moonlight" sonata, which were constantly brought forth by academic institutions as great masterworks of Western culture. As Fukumoto puts it, "the current of the day's cultural doctrine was the cause [of Beethoven's rise to greatness.]"<sup>56</sup> Fukumoto's assertion is supported by the fact that Romain Rolland's book *Beethoven*, which Nicholas Cook calls "the bible of the Beethoven cult...in France before the First World War," was translated into Japanese in the 1920's, and was readily available there during the formative years of Beethoven reception.<sup>57</sup> Cook quotes a 1970 article by music critic Yoshida Hidekazu in which he claimed that "Beethoven has assumed something of the stature of a national hero," and that his students found Romain Rolland's motto of "Joy through suffering" to be "deeply moving," revealing an enduring influence of Rolland's text.<sup>58</sup>

The second year of the Showa era, 1928, saw the commemoration of the centennial of Beethoven's death. Concerts in the Tokyo area programmed many of Beethoven's best-known works. The 1928 concert season was the beginning of fixed-interval concert seasons

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<sup>55</sup> Fukumoto Yasuyuki, "Beethoven Reception IV," 2.

<sup>56</sup> Fukumoto Yasuyuki, "Beethoven Reception IV," 2.

<sup>57</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 24, 97.

<sup>58</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9*, 97.

for several newly formed smaller orchestras such as the Chuo Symphony Orchestra (later the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra) and the Tukaratsuka Symphony. From this year forward, symphony and chamber music concerts increased all over the country, and classical record sales rose sharply. During this period, publications in music journals began to focus more on Beethoven's works and their analysis than on his image and character as "*Gakusei*."<sup>59</sup> However, the 1920s and 1930s also saw increasing prejudice against Western music and pride in Japanese traditional music. In 1938 a prominent music magazine entitled *Ongaku Shincho*, "New Musical Directions," ran an article calling for a boycott of all Western music.<sup>60</sup> This journal was issued by a Tokyo music shop which had previously specialized in importing Western scores and recordings, and the magazine covered European performances as well as Japanese performances of European works.<sup>61</sup> The government slowly began to ban Western musical works. By the end of the thirties, most non-German Western classical music was banned, but government control seems to have been very lenient for the first few years of the war. Takahashi Iwao, the first musical manager for the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra, describes the state of music performance during the war in his memoir, "Stories of the Upheaval of Music in the Showa Era." Although he describes the government's opposition of Western classical music, he remembers that well into the early forties, orchestras were allowed to mostly program whatever they wanted because the Japanese did not come to large concerts of newly composed nationalistic military music.<sup>62</sup> The influence

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<sup>59</sup> Fukumoto Yasuyuki, "Beethoven Reception," 2.

<sup>60</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 115.

<sup>61</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 97.

<sup>62</sup> Takahashi Iwao, *Showa Gekido no Ongaku Monogatari*, (Fukuoka-shi: Ashi Shobo, 2002), 55.



of National Socialism in Germany also was not an all-powerful force in Japanese concert life, as evidenced by a recital in 1939 by the 12-year old violin prodigy Mary Estelle Iwamoto, which included not only works by Jewish Composers, but also on specifically Jewish subjects.<sup>63</sup> Thus, while the music of Japan's allies Germany and Italy was more acceptable to the government than its enemies' music, orchestras still largely programmed the works that they had always favored, including the occasional concert of French or Russian music.

If the omnipresence of Beethoven's works was indeed the cause of his rise to fame among the general populous, it is not surprising that by the thirties and forties his was the most famous Western name in Japanese households. The spread of his music began with schoolchildren's melodies and smaller chamber pieces such as the piano sonatas, the violin sonatas, and the string quartets, but by the thirties and into the forties, almost no concert or recital is complete without his music, no matter the performing forces. Advertisements for concerts in the daily and weekly newspapers consistently show programs that contain Beethoven's works, and frequently lead with them, as if to attract immediate attention and establish the performer's legitimacy as a performer of *Yogaku*, or Western music (see Figure 2 below).<sup>64</sup> From the piano recitals of Tokyo School of Music's faculty members to the recitals of promising young violin and vocal prodigies to the well-attended seasons of the major symphony orchestras, everyone who was anyone was playing Beethoven. For example, the November 1, 1942 *Japan Times and Mail's* "Concert Calendar" section announced four

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<sup>63</sup> *Japan Times and Mail* Monday Nov. 13 1939, 4. Iwamoto's program included Vitali's *Chaconne*, Mendelssohn's violin concerto, a *Grave* by Bach/Kreisler, *Nigun* from Bloch's *Baal Shem*, and Wieniawski's *Polonaise Brillante*.

<sup>64</sup> *Yogaku* – 洋楽.

upcoming recitals by pianists, a string quartet, and a cellist, all of which were to include Beethoven's pieces. The concert reviews also covered three piano recitals, all of which contained at least one Beethoven sonata. The longest paragraph in this section described Tokyo Music School faculty member Leonid Kreutzer's recital, extolling his exquisite interpretations of the two Beethoven sonatas he played.<sup>65</sup>

Figure 2 – *Japan Times and Mail*, Sunday December 5, 1943, p.3. Advertisements for upcoming recitals in the Tokyo area, with mentions of Beethoven's pieces circled and starred.

...the lack of Negro leaders and local conciliatory facilities with regard to newspaper agitation, while in other cases some newspapers denied that the riots were racial in character.

The Federal Government, on the other hand, has taken the stout and to handle at any time during the war cases of Negro suppression, believing that if they should take up this delicate question now it would whip up internal dissension of ramifying proportions.

**Congress Still Prejudiced**

The same attitude prevails in Congress where representatives from the South and those of the North fending Negro encroachment are against any change in the status of the Negro, a point of view accepted by the executive branch.

The business world, meantime, does not seriously ponder the question of Negro employment. According to the Fortune Magazine's survey appearing in the February issue, between 10 and 17.3 per cent of the 5,000 managers under survey were employing Negroes, two-thirds of whom, the magazine said, were below par in efficiency and thus unemployed.

Moreover, the middle classes and the agriculturists of the South are taking pains to maintain their superior position, while labor organizations and the agriculturists of the North are discriminatory toward the Negro laborer.

Among those who are unhesitatingly antagonistic are those who are extending sympathetic understanding to this Negro problem. They include among them the author of *Brothers under the Skin*, Carey McWilliam. On the basis of the National Fair Racial Practice Act, a Federal organ has been set up to handle the problem while Thomas Sanction, R. I. said has organized a bureau in the State Department.

In official circles there is a Robert Whitney of the Negro Employment

tion of the State authorities in the absence of Negro supervision of the whites. He has advocated that the equality of the Negro employee in industry and equality of the Negro in the nation's armed forces are pressing problems. Safeguards should be given, he said, to the Negro to whom it should be insisted that he would not be forced out of his work before his fellow white employees with the termination of the war. However in the final analysis their voice is exceedingly small.

Thus, while the Negro's self-awareness has been accelerated by the impact of war, the white American's deep-seated antagonism in the acquiescence, more or less of indifference, among the Negro affairs. Nevertheless, the general apathy of Americans have not come to the point of reaching the seriousness of the question in considering the need of making counter-proposals. The Liberator among them, meantime, avoid touching upon the edge of this vexing problem, while the authorities themselves merely scrape the surface and handle Negro cases only as they crop up to the fore from time to time.

Due to this fundamental settlement of the Negro question, therefore anti-racial feeling between the Negroes and the whites are likely to mount in intensity, boiling nothing but a tar for the course with regard to the future of the Negro question in a United States.



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Visiting guest artists also brought Beethoven to the Japanese, and it is possible that by the thirties, his music's popularity influenced their programming decisions. Japan had a

<sup>65</sup> *Japan Times* Nov. 1 1942

special relationship with the port city of Harbin. The *Japan Yearbook* in 1924-25 mentions that about 5,000 Japanese lived in the city at that time. The author wrote that “they organize[d] themselves into a self-governing body, [had] their own...schools and also a hospital where Japanese and foreign patients are treated.”<sup>66</sup> The Yearbook refers to Harbin as part of “Asiatic Russia,” although today it is considered a part of China. The city originally developed through the efforts of Russian railroad workers, and has a long history of being home to considerable populations of Russian, Japanese, and Chinese residents.<sup>67</sup> In 1939, the Harbin Symphony Orchestra came to Tokyo to give a series of five “goodwill concerts” conducted by Sergei Schwaikowsky. The membership of the orchestra may have included Japanese residents of Harbin, but not much is known about the history of the Harbin Symphony. Their five concerts include several Russian composers’ work, but only the second concert contained only Russian music. The fourth concert was an all-Beethoven evening, including the Egmont Overture, the Fifth Piano Concerto, and the Fifth Symphony.<sup>68</sup> Their first program also contained the funeral march from Beethoven’s Third Symphony, as a tribute “to dedicate the spirits of the heroes who have laid down their lives valiantly in the present conflict for their country.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Japan Yearbook* 1924-25, 46

<sup>67</sup> Søren Clausen and Stig Thøgersen, *The Making of a Chines City: History and Historiography in Harbin*, (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995) ,23-24.

<sup>68</sup> *Japan Times Weekly*, Thursday March 23, 1939, 391.

<sup>69</sup> *Japan Times Weekly*. This is a strange tribute considering the history of strained relations between the Soviet Union and Japan. Border disputes were still occurring, keeping alive bad blood from the days of the Russo-Japanese war around the turn of the century. Harbin itself became a site of struggle between the two countries during the Second World War. The Japanese occupied the city when they set up the Manchurian puppet state in the early 1930s, and the Soviet army took the city back in 1945. The musical relationship between these two cities and the history of concert life in Harbin remains to be explored.

By the time of the Second World War, Beethoven's music held such strongly valued cultural capital that it represented the prestige and advancement of Japan's rise to equity with the great Western European powers. On December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1943, the *Japan Times and Mail* ran a piece entitled "Fujiwara to Stage Beethoven's Opera." The Fujiwara Opera company, founded and run by tenor Yoshie Fujiwara, celebrated its tenth anniversary by staging *Fidelio* on December 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>.<sup>70</sup> Fujiwara told the paper, "I am extremely happy in being able to announce the presentation of *Fidelio*...Why? Because it's one of the most difficult grand operas, and one not often staged even in Europe, the home of opera. Now I have the satisfaction of knowing that Japan has the talent necessary for such a production." Not only do his remarks reveal that a performance of *Fidelio* represents a major accomplishment and advancement in Western music in Japan, but they also appear in a full-column article in the Friday daily edition, a rare honor for any musical subject by the forties.

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<sup>70</sup> *Japan Times and Mail*, Friday December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1943, p. 3

#### 4. The Second World War and Japan's "Cultural Chauvinism"

Japan's involvement in the Second World War was turbulent and carried with it abrupt changes in ideology. Japan's changing status on the world stage and its evolving relationships with other nations meant both internal and external influences affected daily life. In less than a century, the Japanese had opened their borders after a long-standing isolation, embraced Westernization as the future of their culture, rose to eminence in Southeastern Asia as a political, economic, and military power, and developed a nationalism which promoted Japanese culture as the pinnacle of refinement and restraint. With their defeat in 1945, this nationalism came crashing down, replaced by enthusiasm for democracy and the culture of the occupying powers. Throughout the war, scholars, critics, and government officials debated the appropriateness of using Western classical music, and particularly the Western system of tonality in Japanese music. A widespread nationalism had matured and spread throughout the country in the years leading up to the war, propagated by the government. In music, this gave rise to a view of Western tonality as oppressive and foreign, a force that robbed Japan of her native cultural beauty. In spite of the concern that Western music could impoverish Japanese cultural life, many prominent figures in Japan defended the music of Ludwig van Beethoven as an exception, offering plentiful reasons for justifying the use of his music in *Shin-nihon* (新日本), or the "New Japan."

The fascist regime in Italy and the National Socialist regime in Germany both took significant interest in the arts, and particularly in music, during the 1930s and 1940s, sanctioning certain styles and composers and condemning others.<sup>71</sup> During the Second

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<sup>71</sup> Pamela M. Potter, "Musicology under Hitler: New Sources in Context," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 49, No. 1 (Spring 1996), 70-113.

World War, Japan's military regime developed similar interest in controlling the culture of their people. The government commissioned military songs, or *gunka*, from native composers. These military songs were sung by large choruses, usually comprised of only male voices, and were largely homophonic or monophonic. The tradition of unison choral singing is a long-standing one in Japan, and calls to mind their traditional work songs and festival songs.<sup>72</sup> *Gunka* comprise a significant portion of the government-commissioned musical output between 1939 and 1945, and are some of the only militaristic, war-related compositions that survived the post-war democratization.<sup>73</sup> Although the government wanted such music to take the place of the popular Western music in concert halls and on the radio, the Japanese people had a limited interest in *gunka* and similar military music.

A study by Ury Eppstein centering on public elementary school songbooks has provided insight into what Eppstein refers to as the Japanese "cultural chauvinism" prevalent during the war.<sup>74</sup> In books published before the war, Western melodies were occasionally used in order to introduce the fundamentals of theory early in the process of musical education, but the majority of the tunes consisted of either traditional song tunes or newly-composed tunes using traditional Japanese scales, which would have been the systems most aurally familiar to small children. The texts centered largely on natural subjects: flora, fauna, and landscapes native to Japan, with only the occasional mildly patriotic reference. During

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<sup>72</sup> Bonnie Wade, *Music in Japan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 132.

<sup>73</sup> Sarah McClimon, "Patriotism, Emotion, Empire: Gunka and Constructions of the Nation in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Japan," (paper presented to the Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting, Columbus, OH, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007).

<sup>74</sup> Ury Eppstein, "School Songs Before and After the War: From *Children Tank Soldiers* to *Everyone a Good Child*," *Monumenta Nipponica* 42, No. 4. (Winter, 1987), 431-447.

the war, Western melodies completely disappeared from government educational publications, replaced with a small percentage of traditional tunes and a much larger percentage of newly composed tunes in Japanese scales. The government's new policies on education called for more emphasis on the national culture and aesthetics, but this was paired with the total exclusion of all foreign music. The government's goals included not only the furthering of patriotism but also "the [cultivation of] creative capacity for labor,"<sup>75</sup> as evidenced by the militaristic, energetic qualities of many of the melodies themselves. The texts also became gradually more and more explicit not only in terms of nationalism but also in reference to the war and Japan's enemies. And even the illustrations, in some later examples, featured Japanese soldiers in uniform. Descriptions of Japan set the country apart as a near-deified entity to be worshipped through continuing devotion. Although post-war songbooks retain similar educational goals in terms of aesthetic sense and appreciation for beauty, there is a stark contrast between the explicit glorification of nationalism and patriotism during the war, and the absence of any nationalist or "non-democratic" elements in post-war publications.

Like education, the arts began to show the influence of a nationalist government attitude, and the evidence survives in concert programs, radio programming schedules, and newspaper reports. The Sunday, January 1<sup>st</sup> 1939 (New Year's Day) edition of the *Japan Times and Mail* ran a piece with the headline "Foreign Musicians Missing but Season Rated Success: Nation Becoming Less and Less Dependent on Europeans."<sup>76</sup> The columnist

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<sup>75</sup> Ury Eppstein, "Children's School Songs," 432.

<sup>76</sup> *Japan Times and Mail*, January 1, 1939, 3.

maintained that in spite of the lack of famous European artists in 1938, the concert life in Japan had been especially rich and impressive. World conflict might be keeping the international stars away, but the Japanese students returning from their European studies were of a very high caliber and comparable to the missing superstars. The “Fine Musical Organizations” which the Tokyo area could boast in 1939 included the New Symphony Orchestra, which the columnist took care to mention had “in the space of a little more than a decade since its founding...seen fit to dispense with all foreign assistance except for its conductor.”<sup>77</sup> This national pride clashed with the existence of Western music as an entirely separate realm of the performing arts in Japan, which had been brought in from the outside and assimilated into Japanese culture. The Japanese faced the problem of how to maintain Western instruments, forms, ensembles, and composers which they had come to appreciate, while still embracing the nationalist spirit of the wartime.

One interesting example of the clash between nationalism and regard for foreign musicians and music is the grand concert planned to celebrate the 2600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japan’s founding. The Japanese government asked for and received contributions from five notable international composers: Richard Strauss, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Sandor Veress, Jacques Ibert, and Benjamin Britten. These composers were asked to write pieces that would celebrate Japan’s long and glorious history. Mentions of Britten’s inclusion disappear from newspapers after his contribution, the *Sinfonia da Requiem*, was received — it expressed his dissent against war and violence, and the government obviously could not have considered it

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<sup>77</sup> *Japan Times and Mail*, January 1, 1939, 3.



appropriate material for a celebration.<sup>78</sup> The remaining four composers' works, Pizzetti's *Sinfonia In Celebrazione dell XXVio Centenario della Fondazione dell'Impero Giapponese*, Veress's *Hungarian Greetings on the 2600th Anniversary of the Japanese Dynasty*, Ibert's *Ouverture de fête pour célébrer le 26e centenaire de la fondation de l'empire Nippon*, and Strauss's *Japanische Festmusik* were received and performed with excitement, but the *Japan Times Weekly* focused most of its attention on Strauss's *Japanische Festmusik*. The July 18<sup>th</sup> edition features a large picture of Strauss at the piano in Berlin, playing samples of his work for visiting Japanese dignitaries (see Figure 3 below). The columnist wrote "Richard Strauss, one of the world's greatest living composers, has completed composition of his latest Symphony, which he has dedicated to Japan...and recently handed over his handwritten orchestra score to Japanese Ambassador Saburo Kurusu, at a formal dedicating ceremony held in Berlin in the presence of German notables, prominent members of the Japanese colony, and representatives of German institutions connected with the study of Japanese culture." The description of the piece itself called it "a symphony in three movements, the first being a Heroic Prelude, the second a musical depiction of Japanese folklore, and the third a festive hymn solemnizing the 26<sup>th</sup> centenary of the Japanese Empire." The columnist continued by praising Strauss's eminence, calling him "the most illustrious figure" of the four whose submissions were chosen for the concert, "and for this reason his symphony is being anticipated with particularly keen expectations in Japanese musical circles. He is not only the greatest German composer of the present day, but undoubtedly one of the very few

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<sup>78</sup> Philip Brett, et al. "Britten, Benjamin." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/46435pg3> (accessed February 28, 2009).

great contemporary composers in the world.”<sup>79</sup> These descriptions reveal several reasons that Strauss’s music might be acceptable: he is a German ally, his music extols and focuses on Japanese cultural subjects, and his “Heroic Prelude” and “festive hymn” bear a perceptible similarity to Beethoven’s works, placing this symphony in the tradition of great German classics. This celebration of Strauss’s work stands in sharp relief against an August article in the *Times*, which declares that a contest for Japanese composers asking for new works “reflecting the spirit of the national celebration” resulted in no winners because none of the entries were “found sufficiently qualified to be given the distinction of a public performance.”<sup>80</sup> Providing contrast to these insufficiencies, the article featured a photograph of Strauss’s handwritten score (see Figure 4 below).

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<sup>79</sup> *Japan Times Weekly* Thursday July 18, p. 425.

<sup>80</sup> *Japan Times Weekly* Thursday, August 15, 1940, p.571-2. The judges for this competition included Kiyoshi Nobutoki, a Tokyo Music School professor, Saburo Moroi, a member of the Japanese League of Contemporary Composers, Joseph Rosenstock, conductor of the New Symphony Orchestra, and the arts committee of the NSO. The contest offered no prize and the jury was not revealed until the contest was closed, which could be why there were only fourteen submissions.

Figure 3 – Richard Strauss at the piano, surrounded by several Japanese dignitaries visiting Berlin to receive his “Festival Overture.” *Japan Times Weekly* Thursday, July 18, 1940, p. 425.

# MUSICAL JOTTINGS

## WORLD COMPOSERS OFFER MUSICAL WORKS TO HONOR JAPAN'S 2600TH ANNIVERSARY

Richard Strauss, one of the world's greatest living composers, has completed composition of his latest Symphony, which he has dedicated to Japan on the occasion of the 26th centenary celebrations of the Japanese Empire's Founding, and recently handed over his handwritten orchestra score to Japanese Ambassador Saburo Kurusu, at a formal dedicating ceremony held in Berlin in the presence of German notables, prominent members of the Japanese colony, and representatives of German institutions connected with the study of Japanese culture.

News of the completion of Richard Strauss' composition closely followed the arrival in Japan of a Symphony "Expressing Hungarian Greetings on the 2600th Anniversary of the Japanese Dynasty," by Sando Veress, one of the leading young composers in Hungary today.

Within a few days, the score of another orchestra work, by Jacques Ibert, one of the foremost French composers of the present day, is expected to arrive in Japan. Other noted musicians who have announced their intention to express their congratulations to Japan and her people on the occasion of the 2600th anniversary, include Benjamin Britten, successful young English composer, and Ildebrando Pizzetti, noted Italian musician.

Plans are now being considered by the Society for the Celebration of the 26th Centenary of the Japanese Empire's Foundation, and the Board of Celebrations of the Cabinet, for a special concert to be held with a splendor unprecedented in the annals of Japanese musical life, at which these compositions will be given their first performance. Included in these plans are the organization of a large orchestra, in which the best members of the existing Japanese symphony or-

chestras are to be combined; local radio broadcasts and international broadcast exchange programs through which the new compositions are to be popularized; and, possibly, the recording of the works on phonograph disks.

Richard Strauss' work the score of which is to reach Japan shortly from Berlin, is reportedly a sym-

phony in three movements, the first being a Heroic Prelude, the second a musical depiction of Japanese folklore, and the third a festive hymn solemnizing the 26th Centenary of the Japanese Empire. The aged composer is said to have written this work at his mountain villa in Garmisch, from March till early June of this year.

Among the well-known composers who are dedicating their works to the Japanese people, Richard Strauss is undoubtedly the most.

(Please Turn to Page 139)



Richard Strauss playing his composition written in honor of Japan's 26th centenary. Standing at his side is Ambassador Kurusu, envoy to Berlin and at extreme left, Viscount Hidemaro Konoye, brilliant Japanese composer

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Figure 4 – Strauss's *Festmusik* score, pictured in the *Japan Times Weekly*, Thursday, August 15, 1940.

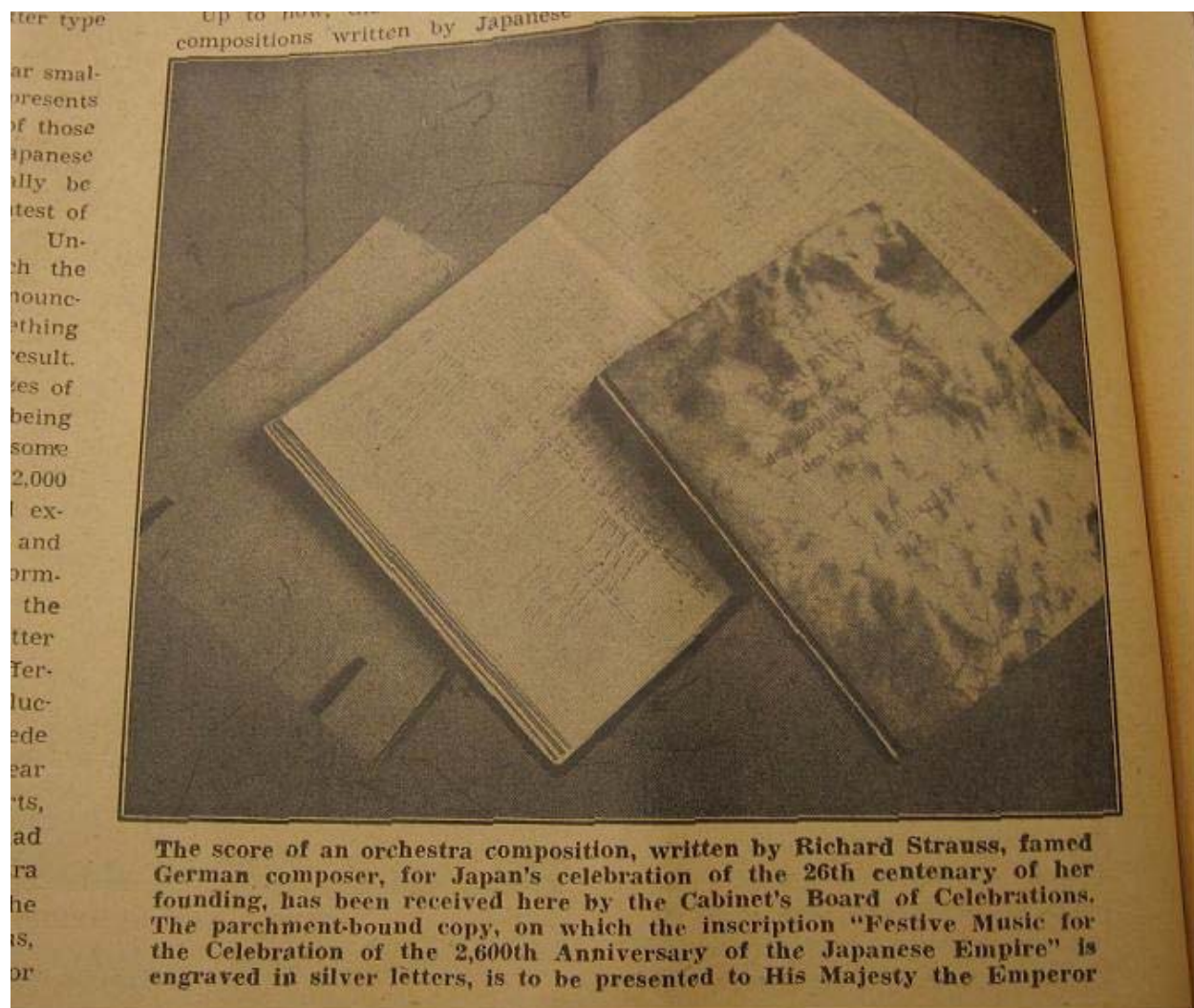




Figure 5 – The 170-member orchestra at the centenary celebration, pictured in the *Japan Times Weekly*.



## **The Use-Value of Western Tonality and the Growing Threat of Government Censorship**

In addition to encouraging musicians to perform European classics as a part of Westernization in the Meiji era, the government also encouraged Japanese composers to develop compositional styles that incorporated their new Western theoretical training, and this interest continued into the war period. In a letter dated March 23rd, 1936, composer and music teacher Taijiro Goh wrote about his 150 students in the Japanese League of Composers, stating their determination to "complete our pure national music in future," but relating how efforts to use their own national scales and melodies without theoretical organization had

proved unsuccessful.<sup>81</sup> As a result, he says, the Japanese felt the need to study "the perfect theories by West," in order to "...compose or find new Japanese pure music in Western high style, in its instrumentation, systems, and theoretical elements." This reflects a general artistic and scholarly attitude of pragmatic "use value" that was encouraged by the Japanese government during the years leading up to the Second World War. However, many prominent figures in Japan were concerned about foreign influence, and fiercely opposed the notion that Japanese traditional music needed to be imbued with tonality to be palatable to sophisticated listeners.<sup>82</sup> It seems that Japanese traditional music and Western classical music were regarded by many as completely separate, disparate styles. Many Japanese composers' attempts to use Western tonality resulted in music that sounded completely Western, just as German composers living in Japan wrote works which showed little to no indication of Japanese influence.<sup>83</sup> As a result, some composers began efforts to blend the two traditions. Japanese composers such as Yoshinao Nakata and Yamada Kōsaku began composing *Lieder* in the German tradition, but using Japanese aesthetic concepts and traditional melodies.

In the midst of the concern that Japanese tradition not be lost in the flood of Western culture entering Japan, the twenties and thirties were decades of radical change in Japan. Universal male suffrage was adopted in 1925, around the same time that Marxist

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<sup>81</sup> Taijiro Goh, "Letter from the Japanese League of Composers," in *Music Since 1900* 6<sup>th</sup> edition, ed. Laura Diane Kuhn and Nicolas Slonimsky, (New York: Schirmer Reference/Gale Group, 2001), 939.

<sup>82</sup> Galliano, *Yogaku*, 98.

<sup>83</sup> Galliano, *Yogaku*, 41.

ideology began to take root in scholarly communities.<sup>84</sup> The thirties were characterized by tension, repression, attempted military coups, and aggressive expansionist policies. Underlying all of this activity was a growing nationalism which blamed Westernization and Western thought for many societal issues. The most elevated intellectuals and the political figures of the leading party supported this nationalism, teaching party ideology as "ethics."<sup>85</sup> This practice continued into the war period, and the government attempted to exert strong control over musical activity. Some composers willingly participated in the regime's activities while some quietly protested or stopped writing music altogether, stunned by the shift from total Westernization to a growing rejection of Western art.<sup>86</sup> In music, government censorship mostly meant new regulations and difficulty in gaining permissions for concerts and radio airplay.

State censorship was not limited to enemy Western music from nations such as Britain, France, or the United States. The rise of Marxism in the twenties gave birth to "Proletariat Music Leagues" which sought to strengthen the musical education and culture of the working classes. Clubs emerged for listening, discussions, and impromptu performances of new music. Whereas the government generally sought to limit the popularity of Western music and promote Japanese nationalist music, they strictly opposed Marxism, and state repression meant that members of these leagues had to frequently switch memberships and meet underground in order to avoid detection. Many of their scores and documents were

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<sup>84</sup> Galliano, *Yogaku*, 113.

<sup>85</sup> Galliano, *Yogaku*, 114.

<sup>86</sup> Galliano, *Yogaku*, 114.

confiscated.<sup>87</sup> Some native music and theater arts also came under criticism during the war, including instruments like the *shamisen* which were associated with upper-class music under the feudal system. Censorship efforts on native music and on politically-charged musical movements spearheaded by the Japanese were quickly suppressed. However, government control did not seem to have a substantial effect on Western music until the middle of the Second World War.

Once the United States entered the war in December of 1941, censorship efforts increased. Popular music such as Blues and Jazz was most harshly attacked, and the government went so far as to outlaw specific instruments associated with this enemy music, including the banjo and the electric guitar.<sup>88</sup> Much of the Western art music that the people had learned to accept during the Meiji era was declared "decadent" and unfit for the new regime in the early forties. Even some of Japan's own native music, particularly the music of the *biwa* and *koto*, which were associated with high society and the pleasure quarters, were now considered beneath the citizens of the new Japan.<sup>89</sup> Composer Morimoto Kakutan wrote in his "Shin-Nihon Bunka e no Ongaku no Shimei" (The Fate of the New Japanese Culture's Music):

With Japan's Great Leap Forward, Japan's music must also take a Great Leap forward. But wasting reactionary words and glorifying ancient Japanese music and rejecting all the foreign music is a regression from Japan's Great Leap forward. As for us all, we

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<sup>87</sup> Galliano, *Yogaku*, 118.

<sup>88</sup> Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 83.

<sup>89</sup> Fukumoto, "Beethoven Reception IV", 9.



as a really great nation must with generosity and with transparent reason, benevolently deal with truly great [foreign composers.] For instance, we have a greater need for Beethoven's Symphonies than for the Tokugawa era's *shamisen* music and degenerate red-light district music. Instead of playing "Kimigayo" on Shamisen, it is more appropriate played by orchestral sound. Things have appropriateness and inappropriateness and, depending on the time period, there is rise and fall.<sup>90</sup>

Beethoven's music, however, enjoyed not only the regime's toleration, but its distinct approval. Several important Japanese scholars and military leaders argued on behalf of Beethoven's music, citing its origins in the Germanic tradition as a reason for its legitimacy. Relations with Germany, which had historically been strong and centered on the Arts, played a major role in this acceptance and affirmation of German music, both old and new. Organizations such as the Japanisch-Deutsche Werkaustausch and the Deutsches Forschungsinstitut had laid the groundwork for the continued survival of German art, as had many composers' own Germanic training. Music critic Kodou Nomura wrote the following defense of German music in the music journal *Ongaku Chishiki*, "Musical Wisdom":

In principle, the boycott of British and American (music) records should be enforced for the sake of raising national morale and for annihilating our enemies' culture. And that only applies strictly to British and American things. We must not simply boycott all Western music that carries the role as great culture of mankind. Perfectly sound

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<sup>90</sup>Fukumoto, "Beethoven Reception IV," 9. Although Fukumoto gives citations of which journal (*Ongaku Kouron*, "Music Criticism") and which issue contains each quotation, he does not give a specific year of publication – he examined the journal between 1943 and 1945.

Western music, above all, German music techniques and spirit, have been digested by the huge Japanese cultural appetite in the past decades, is it not true that it was already becoming our soul food from the start? Truly the only music to attack should be limited to American Jazz records out to decompose cultures of the world, and any British and American music records made by the Brits and the Yanks, such music possesses absolutely no creativity or artistic taste whatsoever.<sup>91</sup>

Japanese scholar Hirose Masakazu revealed the Japanese view of how Germans utilized Beethoven's music in the war in his article "Daitoa Ongaku Bunka Housaku Shiron" ("A Study of the Great East Asian War's Music Culture Policy").

I have heard that in Germany when the gunsmoke had not yet vanished from the occupied areas, they immediately sent the Berlin Philharmonic to perform Beethoven and Wagner's works in order to make an effort to establish public peace and order. Of course, conditions in Japan and Germany are different, but this [reaction] is brought about at least partially because of the deep-seated tradition of German music and its excellence. We are not discussing the superiority or inferiority between artistic values of Japanese music or German music.<sup>92</sup>

German music performance continued to survive, as evidenced by important events such as the "Grand Music Patriotic Movement Concerts," an undertaking of the Musical Culture Association and the *Asahi Shinbun*, one of the most widely-read newspapers of the

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<sup>91</sup> Kodou Nomura, quoted in Eddy Y. L. Chang, "The Daiku Phenomenon: Social and Cultural Influences of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Japan," in *Asia Europe Journal* Vol. 5, no. 1, March 2007, <http://www.springerlink.com/content/q3jp0g84460pp314/>, 98-99.

<sup>92</sup> Fukumoto, "Beethoven Reception IV," 10.

day. These concerts, which were overseen and supported by the Japanese government, programmed more music by native Japanese composers than the performing ensembles' regular subscription concerts. However, German music still comprised more than half of the first concert's program. The first concert, held on November 19, 1942, included Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Rossini's Overture to *William Tell*, Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, a selection from Bizet's *Carmen*, and compositions by Kōsaku Yamada, Tomojiro Ikeuchi, Rentaro Taki, Tsugio Tsuyuki, and others Japanese composers.<sup>93</sup> The first concert was presented in various cities, and the *Japan Yearbook* recalls that "Notwithstanding that the concerts were held in the largest public buildings or theaters, the houses were always overcrowded; and all the performances impressed the audience so deeply."<sup>94</sup> The second concert program, performed between March 20<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 1943, kept Beethoven's Fifth and also presented the Hymn of the Imperial Army and various "compositions by Kunuhiko Hashimoto, Rentaro Taki, Kiyoshi Nobutoki, Kōsaku Yamada, and Strauss." Many other performances given in 1942 and 1943 involved the members of the main symphonies and school orchestra and choral programs, and they programmed an increasing percentage of newly-composed Japanese music on war-related themes.<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps more important than the German nation's acceptability, Japanese writers argued, was the fact that Beethoven's works were characterized by staunch masculinity, a

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<sup>93</sup> *Japan –Manchouko Yearbook* 1943-44, 806.

<sup>94</sup> *Japan-Manchouko Yearbook* 1943-44. 806.

<sup>95</sup> See *Japan Yearbook 1943-44* pp.806-807 for a list of important musical events between 1942 and 1943. Examples of the war-themed pieces include: "Japanese Empire" by Shimizu Fujii, "Victorious Battle" by Kazuko Nakaseko, "Song of Extolling Heroic Deeds" by Masao Oki, and "Let us go to the Front," by Yasuji Kiyose. All of these were also broadcast over the radio to the entire country.

trait befitting the Japanese, particularly in a time of war and struggle, when the war effort ran parallel with the struggle to create an international Japanese identity. Composer Yamada Kōsaku, in his article "Daitoa Sensō to Ongakuka no Kakugo," ("The Greater East Asian War and the Resolution of Music") stated:

In order to completely carry through the Great East Asian War effort...by means of current weapons (fire arms) the war ends in shining victory. The next activity we must move to immediately is culture activity...because music is the most efficient weapon. The creative activities to completely carry through the great East Asian War are themselves already a part of the effort to construct a national music. And music that we will create should not just be the national music of island country Japan but should be the hymn of praise of the great East Asia. In that sense, from now on, we must compose music with all-inspiring beauty. Although there is good music...as well, the reason why Beethoven's pieces maintain long-lasting life is because in their foundation there exists the spirit of all-inspiring beauty and masculine power is the basic tone of his works.<sup>96</sup>

Beethoven's masculinity was not his only influential trait. In the Western tradition, he is often viewed as the father of the Romantic era because of the way he is seen to have suffered for the sake of his art. The Japanese, aware of the Heiligenstadt testament and all it had come to represent for Western art, viewed Beethoven's unshakeable determination and total dedication to composing as the traits most desirable in a soldier. In a nation producing *kamikaze* (suicide) pilots, whose soldiers were still trained that death, even by one's own

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<sup>96</sup> Fukumoto Yasuyuki, "Beethoven Reception IV," 9. See note 46.

hand, is more honorable than defeat and capture, Beethoven's exhibition of determination elevated him to the status of *Ongaku Gakusei*, literally one who devotes himself totally to music. The characters which compose this title are "gaku," (楽) which is part of the word for music, and "sei," (聖) which implies devotion, sanctification for a divine purpose, or mastery. The connotations mean this title could perhaps be most accurately translated as "Music's Patron Saint." According to Fukumoto, the title, which could have been used for any celebrated musician or composer, was used to set Beethoven apart from other Westerners, as an honorific expression.<sup>97</sup> Although this title emerged before the war, during the war period his champions set him up on a pedestal as not only the ideal warrior, but also the ideal citizen of the new Japan. Eddy Chang quotes the late twentieth-century historian Hayashi Keisuke, who wrote,

Beethoven's life was one where he reached human dignity after having battled with hardship, overcome sufferings, and came through oppressive and cruel conditions... To live life by enduring pain is like the way of life we have inherited from our forefathers. Many common people have learnt to live this way by being brought up in such conditions. If we take this way of life as our nation's trait, then it is understandable to see why Japanese people enjoy Beethoven and feel connected with Beethoven.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Fukumoto Yasuyuki, "Beethoven Reception IV," 10.

<sup>98</sup> Eddy Chang, "The Daiku Phenomenon," 107. The excerpt is from Hayashi's 1986 book on the German Prisoner-of-War camp at Tokushima during the First World War.

#### 4. The Occupation Era and the Survival of the Beethoven Tradition

In the post-war restructuring, Beethoven lost none of his status. While the American occupying forces placed censorship on much of Japanese traditional music, including the entire art of Kabuki theater, they were much more lenient with Western music.<sup>99</sup> They did censor all films with war-related material and even historical or feudal references to Japan's past, but they chose not to ban all German music.<sup>100</sup> And even though food was scarce and Tokyo was in ruins, the performances of the Ninth in October and December 1946 under Rosenstock were well-attended. Japan's defeat signaled a complete turn away from many of their ways of life, such as total devotion to the Emperor – not only was the Allied victory viewed as a military one, but also as a moral one, which affirmed Western culture as the appropriate model for the Japanese to follow.

While the aforementioned study by Ury Eppstein focuses more on the texts contained in the songbooks than on the tunes, he does reveal that popular Western melodies used in pre-war songbooks were reinstated in post-war songbooks, and that German melodies were among them. Of note is the inclusion of the “An die Freude” melody, rewritten as “Yorokobi no Uta,” or “Song of Joy.”<sup>101</sup> Although Eppstein does not detail who the compilers of these revised songbooks might have been, there is little doubt that the occupying forces would have had some influence on the re-structuring of education. But even without outside influence, the Japanese made great efforts to strip away overt nationalism and war-related elements from both education and cultural life. Thus, German melodies, including the

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<sup>99</sup> Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku*, 132.

<sup>100</sup> Takahashi Iwao, *Showa Gekido*, 178.

<sup>101</sup> Ury Eppstein, “Children's School Songs,” 444.

widely-known Beethoven tune, were allowed to remain a part of music education. The German melodies used were largely folk melodies which pre-date both the war and pan-Germanism, so it is quite possible that the compilers perceived no threat in them. As for Beethoven, it would be easy to overlook his inclusion based on his popularity and the cosmopolitan nature of the tune's use, and the long-standing tradition of using his melodies for educational purposes most likely recommended his music to those in charge of restructuring.

After the war, between 1945 and 1949, American occupying forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur set up an office for censorship, and every item submitted for publication had to be reviewed by the censorship offices for approval. The Gordon W. Prange Collection at the University of Maryland preserves the materials submitted during these years, including magazines, books, newspapers, and musical scores.<sup>102</sup> The collection of published musical scores includes many composers from all over the world, both established masters and contemporary artists. There are notable omissions. For example, Johann Strauss's music was published in this period, but Richard Strauss's music was not. Likewise, there is a high concentration of music by classical masters such as Mozart, Chopin and Haydn, but only a very few pieces by Wagner were included in vocal collections. It does not appear that Strauss and Wagner were suppressed by the censorship offices, but rather that there were no submissions for new editions of their pieces, whether due to social stigma or to lack of interest. Further proof that censorship did not necessarily suppress music from enemy countries exists in a collection of marches arranged for piano

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<sup>102</sup>Gordon W. Prange Collection, "Introduction," University of Maryland, <http://www.lib.umd.edu/prange/html/introduction.jsp> (Accessed March 14, 2009).

(see Figure 6 below). A collection of marches could have been viewed as militaristic, but the collection includes not only jaunty dotted-rhythm melodies but also various melodies from the Western European canon, re-voiced to match the “march” style of the rest of the pieces. These pieces range from Wagner’s opera melodies to Bellini’s, and from Beethoven’s Sixth Symphony to Bizet’s *Carmen*. The eclectic blend is made even more diverse by the inclusion of several American traditional melodies, including dance tunes like “Rochester Schottisch” and African-American tunes like “Massa’s in the Cold, Cold Ground.” The tune to the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” even appears under the title “Taro March” (see Figure 6 below). The collection ends with a series of national marches, including “Le Marseillaise” and two pieces entitled “Russian March” and “German March.” Apparently no militaristic or nationalist intent was perceived in this collection, because there are no markings of disapproval on the document. It was checked in August of 1946, and must have appeared to be a collection of simple reductions of popular and well-known melodies for entertainment and educational purposes.



Figure 6 – Cover of *Marches*, published by Nobarasha Publishing Company in 1946<sup>103</sup>



Figure 7 – “Taro March” in *Marches*, p. 2.<sup>104</sup>



Beethoven's music found its way into many publications, and the tradition of its use for education and for solo performance and choral singing may have been its saving grace in the upheaval of the Occupation. Most of the musical scores submitted during these years seem to have been centered on practical use for amateur musicians, including solo collections for piano, violin, and voice, and many collections of choral music geared toward education. There was also an explosion of tutorials on jazz improvisation and guitar tablature, ostensibly in opposition to the effects of the previous ban. Beethoven's piano sonatas continued to enjoy widespread popularity through solo compilations for piano, and the Ninth Symphony's choral movement most likely experienced an increase in popularity and renown through its inclusion in choral collections and independent editions for choir and piano reduction. These scores frequently present the text of *An die Freude* translated into Japanese,

<sup>103</sup> Held by Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries.

<sup>104</sup> Held by Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries.

and printed in *hiragana* (simplified phonetic Japanese text) in the musical score, sometimes alone and sometimes alongside the original German (see Figure 8 below).

Figure 8 – Score of Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony*, p. 180.<sup>105</sup>



Many authors submitted books about Beethoven for publication during the Occupation, and the texts include children’s introductions to his music, in-depth biographies, and analyses of all of his works. Many of these fascinating books are available at the Prange collection, and they showcase Beethoven’s continuing popularity and the consistency of his image as a heroic, romantically tragic master of Western music. The centerpiece of most of the biographies is the Heiligenstadt Testament and the effects of Beethoven’s struggles in creating his “heroic” music. A children’s biography called *Gakusei Monogatari: Beetoben* (楽聖物語：ベートーヴェン), or “Tales of the Great Musicians: Beethoven,” includes descriptive chapter titles such as “Nobiyuku Tensai,” (のびゆく天才). *Tensai* means a genius or child prodigy, and *nobiyuku* connotes stretching, growth, and evolution of skill and

<sup>105</sup> Held by Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries.

almost limitless ability. The book also includes some of Beethoven's melodies in the appendices, to give students a taste of his music.

Figure 9 – *Gakusei Monogatari: Beetoben*, front cover.<sup>106</sup>



Another book about Beethoven, *Beetoben: Kokoro no Shukki*, (ベートーヴェン心の手記), or “Beethoven: the Handwritten Record of his Heart,” actually translates some of his conversations from his famous notebooks into Japanese. *Beetoben no Sakuhin* (ベートーヴェンの作品), “Beethoven’s Works,” published analyses and criticism of Beethoven’s works by opus number in two volumes. The front of the book contains a photo of the Fujiwara Opera Company’s groundbreaking performance of *Fidelio* (See Figure 8 below). *Beetoben Gengakushijuu soukyoku* (ベートーヴェン絃楽四重奏曲), “Beethoven String Quartets” provides thorough analyses of each of the beloved quartets as well. These publications demonstrate the continuing popularity of Beethoven’s works as well as growing scholarly

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<sup>106</sup> Held by Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries.

interest in exploring his music, and none of the books seem to have sparked controversy at the censorship offices. Beethoven's status remained solidly established in educational and performing circuits, and the occupying forces did not challenge the spread of his music or literature about his life.

Figure 10 – Scene from the Fujiwara Opera Company, *Fidelio*, December 27<sup>th</sup> 1943.<sup>107</sup>



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<sup>107</sup> Held by Gordon W. Prange Collection, University of Maryland Libraries.

## 5. A Case Study: The Ninth Symphony as a National Symbol

During the First World War, Japan participated in the conflict as a British ally, protecting colonies in Southeastern Asia and interning thousands of German prisoners of war. A 2006 film by Matsudaira Ken, *Baruto no Gakuen*,<sup>108</sup> or "Bart's Paradise," is based on the true story of a group of German prisoners of war sent to Japanese internment camps during the First World War.<sup>109</sup> The Germans eventually ended up in a camp on Shikoku Island known as Bandō, under the supervision of a kind, humanitarian General, who was criticized for his leniency toward the prisoners and his creative solutions to problems. The Japanese and the Germans developed deep friendships, and when the war was over, some even chose to stay, starting families and careers in Japan. Throughout the film, those who are musically gifted are seen playing their instruments for special occasions and teaching music lessons to young Japanese students. At the end of the film, before the camp is disbanded, the German musicians gather to discuss their final concert. Their conductor insists that they put together a large enough ensemble to perform Beethoven's Ninth as a thank-you for the kindness they were shown, and to honor the greatness of the kind General Matsue Toyohisa. Nothing else will be sufficient to express their gratitude but a performance of the Ninth, because — as the conductor claims — this is the greatest German work. Once all of the instrumentation problems are solved, they perform the entire symphony, eliciting both tears and explosive displays of joy from the attentive audience. The film ends with an implication of increased understanding and fellowship between the Japanese and the Germans, and as the credits roll,

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<sup>108</sup> The title word "Gakuen" would normally be pronounced "rakuen," but since the first character is part of the word for "music," it is pronounced as if it were a part of "Ongaku," music. The word-play emphasizes the musical parts of the film, which make up only a small portion of the overall story.

<sup>109</sup> *Baruto no Gakuen*, (DVD, Directed by Matsudaira Ken, Tokyo: Toei, 2006).

video and audio clips and photographs of various performances of the Ninth in Japan accompany the text.

The story of the performance of Beethoven's Ninth is true, and is widely believed to have been the first performance of the work in Japan. However, the actual performance, given in 1918, appears to have only been a performance of the last movement's choral section.<sup>110</sup> Also, in the actual performance, not only were the soldiers obliged to make many of the instruments they played on by hand, but the German musicians' ranks were also fortified by amateur Japanese musicians from the area.<sup>111</sup> These Japanese musicians were students of the German prisoners of war, who were encouraged to share their artistic talent with the surrounding community. This was not only the case at Bandō, but also at prisoner of war camps in many other locations such as Kurume on the island of Kyushu and Narashimo, near Tokyo.<sup>112</sup> These sites were all considered German cultural hot spots well after the end of the war, just as the wartime cultural interactions were considered the roots of a special relationship between the two countries. According to scholar Eddy Chang, "Germany was, in a manner of speaking, a vital key to Japan's future as a powerful nation. The two nations have often been compared and it is not too uncommon to hear the Japanese say they feel the two peoples share similar traits and fate."<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Eddy Chang, "The Daiku Phenomenon," 96.

<sup>111</sup> Bonnie Wade, *Music in Japan*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17.

<sup>112</sup> Mattias Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*, 80.

<sup>113</sup> Eddy Chang, "The Daiku Phenomenon," 94.

After the war, Beethoven's Ninth was not performed again until 1924, when Tokugawa Yorisada put great effort into bringing several performances together at the Tokyo Music School. Two hundred students and teachers participated in the concerts.<sup>114</sup> The complete symphony was performed three times in November and once in December. Although Tokugawa himself had attended the Bandō camp performance and claimed it as his motivation to organize the 1924 concerts, awareness of the Bandō concert was low, and for some time 1924 was considered to be the year of the first performance of the symphony on Japanese soil.<sup>115</sup> After the Tokyo concerts, the popularity of the Ninth experienced an upsurge, and widespread enthusiasm for the symphony resulted in multiple performances through the twenties and thirties. Through its history in Japan, the symphony has even acquired a special name — it is known to the Japanese simply as “Daiku,” or “The Ninth.”

Japanese interest in the Ninth led to an immense performing tradition carried out during the most widely-celebrated of Japanese holidays, the celebration of the New Year, or *Oshōgatsu*. Thousands of Japanese, from the working class to the most educated, gather in cities to form huge choruses and orchestras. They work hard to memorize the German texts on their own or in small groups and practice the music before coming together in groups as large as 5,000 or even 10,000. The largest performance is usually at Osaka's Suntory Hall, where the performing forces have exceeded 10,000 members.<sup>116</sup> The 2008 performance was the twenty-fifth anniversary of that 10,000-participant concert. In 2007, performances of

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<sup>114</sup> Takahashi Iwao, *Showa Gekido*, 87.

<sup>115</sup> Hirschfeld, *Beethoven in Japan*. 80.

<sup>116</sup> “Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Ten Thousand People's Ninth,” (2008), available from: Tokyo Broadcasting System [http://www.tbs.co.jp/program/dai9\\_20071223.html](http://www.tbs.co.jp/program/dai9_20071223.html) (accessed 20 April, 2008).

Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Japan totaled 155, a number which was down from previous years. Yet nearly all of the performances occurred in late December, during *Oshōgatsu* festivities.<sup>117</sup> The most important and most traditional of Japanese holidays, the new year festivities include Buddhist and Shinto traditions dating back thousands of years, and are meant both to welcome the future and to remember the past. The adoption of Beethoven as the single Western composer worthy of not only inclusion, but also a highly regarded place in these festivities reflects the continuation of his status as *Gakusei* in Japan. This phenomenon has come to be known by the name “Nenmatsu no Daiku,” or “The year-end’s Ninth.”

The history of this performing tradition from the 1917 Bandō performance to today’s Ninth Symphony boom is not entirely clear to scholars, but music producer Iwao Takahashi claims in his memoirs that he came up with the idea to attach the Ninth to the *Oshōgatsu* festivities during the Second World War, in the midst of his work with the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra.<sup>118</sup> An older tradition in the arts was the performance of the Kabuki theater show *Chuushingura*, known commonly in English by its film title, “47 Samurai.” Takahashi writes that Westernization had captured the imaginations of the people and that shows programming Western classical music were much better attended than shows with only Japanese traditional or new music. In order to appeal to the public, he came up with the idea in 1943 of finding

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<sup>117</sup> “Performances of the Ninth,” (2008), available from: <http://www.mde.co.jp/doc.id?id=20071113153900429> (accessed 20 April 2008) . It seems in 2007 that the “Daiku” performances had fierce competition, as the famous Chunichi Dragons were taking a shot at the Japanese National baseball Championship.

<sup>118</sup> Takahashi, *Showa Gekido*, 114. Nicholas Cook attributes the custom’s beginnings to Joseph Rosenstock, conductor of the NHK Orchestra, in 1940 (*Beethoven Symphony No. 9*, p. 97-98). He also says that the custom was to perform it on December 31<sup>st</sup>, to mark the passing of the year, rather than simply performing it late in December during the preparation for the New Year, which is how it is performed today. Rosenstock, however, programmed the work in 1940 and in 1942, but not as a consistent annual event. Takahashi claims that his goal was to program the Ninth every year starting in 1944.



an equivalent concert piece to “47 Samurai.” He first looked for an opera or dramatic work with singers, staging and acting, but claims that he chose the Ninth because it was an accessible work that anyone could enjoy and appreciate. At the time, Handel’s oratorio, *Messiah*, was also popular and several performances at the end of the year occurred in the early forties, but the Ninth became the composition of choice. The New Symphony Orchestra had performed the symphony in December of 1942 under the baton of Joseph Rosenstock, and their concerts were a resounding success. The reason, Takahashi says, is that “Beethoven’s Ninth echoed in the heart of the people, to give them peacefulness of mind and courage.”<sup>119</sup> Performing the Ninth on New Year’s Eve was traditional in some parts of Europe at the time, and today the tradition is continued by the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig.<sup>120</sup>

By 1943, all concerts given were required to obtain government permissions prior to staging, and bombings were making artistic endeavors increasingly difficult. When Takahashi approached the Japanese conductor of the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra in October of 1944 to discuss a year-end performance of the Ninth, he agreed immediately, saying that under severe and insecure conditions, he knew it was the Ninth that energized the people of Japan. This opinion proved to be true once they began to sell tickets in November. Within a week, the show was sold out, so they added another concert, which also sold out quickly. Had there been a performing space available, Takahashi would have added a third evening.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Takahashi Iwao, *Showa Gekido*, 87.

<sup>120</sup> Eddy Chang, “The Daiku Phenomenon,” 104.

<sup>121</sup> Takahashi Iwao, *Showa Gekido*, 114.

Remembering the concert, he recounted that several individual audience members expressed pleasure at the availability of concerts of beloved Western music, since music brought comfort to their harsh reality. He quotes one woman as saying “My husband is now fighting abroad and always when he was at home he listened to records of the Ninth Symphony. And although I personally don’t necessarily like the symphony, I come here in his place and pray for his safe return.” Another woman told him “My son really liked music but he died last year in Southern China. When he was alive he often came to concerts. So I come to see what he liked about these concerts.”<sup>122</sup> These meditative reactions seem to be indicative of wartime opinion concerning the Great Ninth.

The Ninth was not only already a symbol of comfort and peace during the Second World War, but also a symbol the Japanese attached to their own national culture. On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944, a performance of the Ninth was given in honor of students from Tokyo University who had been drafted into military service and had to leave their studies and go to the battlefield. The students responsible for organizing the concert were from the law school, and they had to ask the Japan Philharmonic Orchestra (formerly the New Symphony Orchestra) several times before they could finally be prevailed upon to perform some of the movements in the blistering heat and dangerous wartime conditions.<sup>123</sup> Nicholas Cook quotes an organizer of the event, who stated that “the Ninth Symphony...epitomized their

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<sup>122</sup> Takahashi Iwao, *Showa Gekido*, 107

<sup>123</sup> Suzuki Toshihiro, *"Daiku" to Nihonjin*, (Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1989), 144-145.

desire ‘to carry to the battlefield memories of something close to us, something that symbolized our homeland.’”<sup>124</sup>

The choice of the Ninth as an experience of comfort and emotional healing for the Japanese people is not surprising given their knowledge of the composer’s life and of his choice of poetry. Among the Ninth’s many attractions is its accessibility to the Japanese, who have begun a tradition of learning the choral parts and singing it together in community choruses. The text by Schiller which Beethoven chose to set in his ground-breaking symphony, *An die Freude*, centers on topics of joy, transcendence and brotherhood. The focus of the Enlightenment was on these themes and on the possibility of total peace and understanding, and Schiller, a contemporary of philosopher Immanuel Kant, expressed this dream of peace and goodwill in his Ode. Beethoven, too, believed in the Enlightenment dream of brotherhood and transcendence.<sup>125</sup> It is these themes which have helped the work to become a monument of enlightenment and universalism. The modern European Union even adopted the choral section of the finale of the Ninth as their official anthem in the 1970’s, a suggestion which was made as early as 1955, when the Ode was being used as both the East and the West German anthem in the Olympic games.<sup>126</sup> However, they still refuse to adopt the text, preferring instead to have an anthem expressed “without words, in the universal language of music.”<sup>127</sup> The war had little to no effect on the symphony’s place

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<sup>124</sup> Nicholas Cook, *Beethoven: Symphony No. 9*, 97.

<sup>125</sup> Caryl Clarke, “Beethoven’s Ode as European Anthem,” *Critical Inquiry* 23, No. 4, (Summer, 1997), 792.

<sup>126</sup> Caryl Clarke, *Beethoven’s Ode*, 794-795.

<sup>127</sup> “The European Anthem,” available from: EU [http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/anthem/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/anthem/index_en.htm) (accessed 20 April 2008).

within the canon, in spite of the National Socialists' appropriation of the piece for propagandistic purposes. This is evidenced both by its place as a symbol of European identity within the European Union, and also by the unbroken, ever-increasing line of performances in Japan, from postwar US occupation to the present day.

## **Conclusions**

From the late nineteenth century period of Westernization through involvement in two world wars and restructuring under United States control, Japan has experienced a remarkable amount of change in a relatively short period of time. For the Japanese, Beethoven has stood out from among the Western canon of composers throughout the tempestuous post-isolation periods, and as a result, has become a cultural icon to which the Japanese can attach national significance. Originally, German educators' involvement in the spread of Western music had an impact on the way people viewed and used Beethoven's music. His honored place in the long-established tradition of German art music made his pieces valuable, and German artists' inclusion of his chamber and solo pieces in school curricula and in recitals helped to quickly bring the sounds of his music to many Japanese people. However, while German influence through educational exchange and cultural and political relations had an important impact on the early development of Beethoven's image, the research in this thesis has shown that more issues contributed to Beethoven's continuing popularity. Associations with masculinity in Beethoven's music and themes of self-sacrifice and dedication from Beethoven's own life turned him into a hero in the eyes of the Japanese people. Biographies and articles which presented him as the "Father of Romanticism" created a picture of the ideal citizen of Japan,

willing to lay down life, sacrifice all personal desires, and drive forward in the face of adversity to advance an important cause. And finally, both educational use-value in Beethoven's music and associations of transcendence and brotherhood in the Ninth Symphony were contributors to the lineage of Beethoven performance, consumption, and scholarship in Japan. Once the war was over, Beethoven's inclusion in the respected German tradition was no longer an important recommendation, but by then his image had grown beyond nationality into a place of artistic and educational prestige. Beethoven's enduring celebrity in Japan reveals many avenues through which the Japanese absorbed and assimilated Western musical culture. It is my hope that this study may enable further exploration of Western musical practice in Japan, and of Beethoven's music's role in Japanese music-making.

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